

**Minutes of Partnership Board  
Meeting**



**19th April 2010**

**Present:** James White (Chair)  
Cllr Peter Jones (Oxfordshire County Council)  
Cllr Lesley Legge (Abingdon Town Council)  
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer (Abingdon Town Council)  
Cllr Richard Webber (Vale of White Horse District Council)  
Terry Boswell (Abingdon on Thames Chamber of Commerce)  
Tony Stephens (Miele)  
Jill Carver (Added Ingredients)  
Martin Cox (Culham Centre for Fusion Energy)  
Paul James (officer of Oxfordshire County Council)  
Nigel Warner (officer of Abingdon Town Council)  
Toby Warren (officer of Vale of White Horse District Council)  
Heather Brown (Choose Abingdon Partnership Manager)

**Apologies:** Cllr Sandy Lovatt (Oxfordshire County Council)  
Matt Prosser (officer of Vale of White Horse District Council)  
Suzanne Malcolm (officer of Vale of White Horse District Council)

**Declarations  
of interest:**

Jill Carver - Personal interest as owner and manager of a retail and catering business in Stert Street, Abingdon. Personal interest as a committee member of the Chamber of Commerce.  
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer - Personal interest as a councillor for Vale of White Horse District Council.

**Presenting:** No guest presenters

### 1. Welcome, apologies and minutes

Revisions were made to the minutes following requests from Peter Wiblin and Sandy Lovatt.

#### 2a. Spring promotion - feedback on advertising and further activity

The Partnership Manager presented the outcomes of the Spring promotional day(s) based around the Craft Fair. It was agreed that the two objectives of keeping people in the town and providing a great atmosphere to impress visitors were achieved. The costs of putting on the entertainment had come in almost exactly on the budget of £1500.

There was some discussion about how far the provision of entertainment translates into a direct benefit for the shops and initial research indicates that there is no direct link, except perhaps for the cafes in the immediate vicinity of the Market Place. However it was agreed that an events strategy does have a role to play in the overall marketing of the town as it creates atmosphere and encourages people to think of Abingdon as a place to come for shopping and a day out

#### 2b. What's On Leaflet and further promotion in Round and About magazine

The Partnership Manager reported that a new edition of the What's On leaflet had gone to press and had been booked to go out in the May edition of Round and About with a double page spread advertorial encouraging people to try more holiday activities in their local area. Jill Carver asked why the Chamber of Commerce logo was not shown amongst the logos on the back of the leaflets and the Partnership Manager explained that she had been adopting a policy of showing major funders logos only. In the future the Partnership could expect to be receiving minor funding (in the order of one or two thousand pounds) from many other organisations other than the Chamber and it would become burdensome if every such funder was to have the right to have their logo put on every piece of work put out by the Partnership. It was agreed that in future the Partnership manager did not need to have any funders' logos on such publications and instead a list of all funders would be sufficient.

#### 2c. Market project

The Town Clerk reported that he had had an initial conversation with the organiser of the Abingdon Friday market for Thames Valley Farmers Markets, as agreed in the Choose Abingdon market project proposal. He had been told that they would take the matter to their committee and there was a reasonable chance that they could move the Friday market to a Saturday. The board will wait to hear the outcome of this at their next meeting.

### 3. The Board, its role, its membership and constitutional matters

The Chair pointed out that he and the Partnership Manager had been working in their roles for about 6 months now and he felt that some work was needed to point the Board in the right direction for the future. Whilst the quick win projects that the Partnership Manager had been working on had been good to establish the Partnership's credentials and prove that it can take action, the Board needed to also take a more strategic view. He therefore proposed a strategy meeting, which was agreed unanimously and the date of 13<sup>th</sup> Sep from approximately 10.30am to 3.30pm was chosen. The Partnership Manager will find an appropriate hotel or other venue for this to take place. Board members were asked to forward the names of facilitators they might know and want to recommend to make this day productive and successful.

The Chair also asked the Board to consider this year moving the AGM from the June date that is stated in the constitution to October. In order to do this constitutionally the Partnership Manager will call part of the May meeting as an EGM so that this vote can be taken.

Several Board Members expressed a feeling that the current composition of the Board was not ideal and that more businesses should be involved, particularly big businesses from the outer edges of the town. It was also agreed that someone representing community organisations should perhaps also be involved. A two level structure for the Partnership could potentially be considered. It was agreed that these and other topics should be covered on the strategy day.

It was also noted that the Constitution calls for a Vice Chair to take part in proceedings at an AGM and it was agreed that this position could be temporarily appointed on the day.

#### 4a. Newsletter

The Partnership Manager reported that the newsletter had not gone out due to the requests for amendments that had been raised which were not yet agreed upon. It was agreed that minor changes to the article relating to Abingdon Business Alliance should be made and that some articles would now require a complete rewrite due to time having elapsed (the April 10<sup>th</sup> event has now taken place for example). The Partnership Manager will rewrite the newsletter and the Partnership Chair will sign it off before publication.

#### 4b. Website

The Partnership Manager reported that two agencies were both offering to cut their normal fees to the £5 000 budget that she has indicated is feasible for the Choose Abingdon website. Initially both were quoting a figure in the region of £8-10 000. The budget level was queried by Terry Boswell but Board members with experience of purchasing high-capability websites felt that this was a reasonable figure. The Partnership Manager indicated that she would like some other members of the Board with suitable experience to assist her in conducting a final interview with the two candidates before making the final selection as she felt both agencies were being vague about what exactly they will offer for the budget.

#### 4c. Working groups

The Partnership Manager reported that there had been only partial success setting up working groups as agreed in January's meeting. The "major events" group now has several volunteers and also has a volunteer chairman, Tim Oates. It will be temporarily known under a working title of the H2O Group as the only given instruction to the group is that a major event should utilise Abingdon's position on the Thames. The first meeting of this group will be in May.

#### 5a. Reactions to i-Thame presentation

It was agreed that the i-Thame presentation had been of interest but the Board was not wishing to push forward on having a similar application for Abingdon as one of their projects at present due to the cost. However, it was felt that the Partnership Manager should attempt to secure the app. name if this can be done without major investment so that the Board have the option for the future. The Partnership Manager reported that she had heard from a competitive company planning to produce an app. for Abingdon and therefore it may well be that the name had already been registered.

#### 5b. Community Forum

The Partnership Chair had been able to talk with many exhibitors at the Town Council's Clubs and Societies Day which had been very well attended. There had been strong backing for the idea of a community forum and Lesley Legge said she had been urging this idea for some time. The Partnership Manager was charged with working on organising this event for the late summer/autumn. Mention was made of the possibility of asking OCVA to help with the organisation.

#### 5c. Tourism literature

The Partnership Manager felt that the work done on the Town Maps could logically be extended into a new project to develop tourism literature and materials to help promote the town. It was agreed that she should begin work on this project. The Town Council will want to have input into the final designs and wording.

#### 6. Next meetings:

May 24<sup>th</sup> 2010 - Board Meeting - 1pm Abingdon Town Council offices  
June 28<sup>th</sup> 2010 - Board Meeting - 1pm Abingdon Town Council offices  
July 26<sup>th</sup> 2010 - Board Meeting - 1pm Abingdon Town Council offices  
*September 13<sup>th</sup> 10.30am -3.30pm Strategy Day. Venue to be confirmed*  
September 27<sup>th</sup> 2010 - Board Meeting - 1pm Abingdon Town Council offices  
*October 11<sup>th</sup> 2010 AGM 11am Roysse Room? (to be confirmed)*

October 18<sup>th</sup> 2010 - Board Meeting - 1pm Abingdon Town Council offices  
November 29<sup>th</sup> 2010 - Board Meeting - 1pm Abingdon Town Council offices

7. AOB

The Chair reported that he had delivered the invitation to Abingdon Business Alliance to present their organisation to the Board at the May meeting and this had been accepted.

*HB 14/04/10*